

least 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>.--

— 5. (New) The process according to claim 3 wherein said bake hardening potential is at

least 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>.--

### REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the above-identified patent application, as amended herein, is respectfully requested. Claims 1-3 are presently pending. Claims 1-3 were rejected. Of the claims, Claims 1 and 3 are independent. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to more clearly recite the claimed invention. Specifically, Claims 1 and 3 have been amended to replace the phrases "dressed" with "temper rolled" and "dressing" with "temper rolling." The Iron and Steel Dictionary and Metals Handbook entries attached hereto as Exhibit A demonstrate that it is known in the art that "dressing" means "temper rolling", and that temper rolling is a process known in the art for suppressing and/or removing yield point elongation. Specifically, the Iron and Steel Dictionary illustrates that "to dress" means "temper rolling". The Metals Handbook at pp. 205-206 and 693 demonstrates that temper rolling is a process known in the art to be effective for suppressing and/or removing yield point elongation.

### The §112, Second Paragraph Rejection

Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. It is respectfully submitted that the rejection of Claims 1 and 3 for reciting the phrase "non-ageing steel" is improperly based on the claims as originally filed, and not on the claims as amended on September 29, 1999. This amendment resulted in, *inter alia*, removing the phrase "non-

ageing steel." In view of this amendment, Applicants deem this rejection to be moot.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's rejection of Claim 1 for reciting the phrase "dressed strip" and of Claim 3 for reciting the phrase "cold rolled and dressed" is also improperly based on the claims as originally filed, and not on the claims as amended on September 29, 1999. This amendment removed both the phrases "dressed strip" and "cold rolled and dressed." In view of this amendment, Applicants deem this rejection to be moot.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for reciting the phrase "stove finished." The Examiner asserts that this term is not known to one of ordinary skill in the art, nor distinctly defined in the instant specification. Applicants respectfully submit that such phrase is known to the ordinary artisan. As defined in an English-German Dictionary of Engineering and Technology (attached hereto as Exhibit B), "stove finish" is synonymous with "stove enamel" and "stove drying." One of ordinary skill in the art would thus understand that "stove finished" means "stove enamelling" or "stove drying" of the strip to utilize the bake-hardening potential.

The Examiner further rejected Claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for reciting the broad recitation "high bake-hardening potential" along with "more particularly of more than 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>." The phrase "more particularly of more than 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>" has been removed from Claims 1 and 3 and incorporated into new Claims 4 and 5. In view of such amendments, Applicants deem the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, to be obviated and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.

### **The §103 Rejection**

Claims 1 - 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over

Stevenson (U.S. Patent No. 4,358,325, hereafter "Stevenson"). For a rejection to be sustained under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), the differences between the features of the reference and the claimed invention must have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time of the invention.

The Examiner asserts that Stevenson teaches a process for making a steel strip with improved formability comprising hot or cold rolling, cooling to a temperature below room temperature and forming as presently claimed in Claim 1. The Examiner further asserts that Stevenson teaches that a steel strip can be retained at room temperature for approximately a week prior to forming as presently claimed in Claim 3. The Examiner acknowledges that Stevenson does not teach bake hardenability of a strip that has been processed according to the instant invention, but asserts that because Stevenson teaches substantially the same method as presently claimed, substantially the same results, *i.e.*, bake hardening, would occur.

It is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated by the teachings of Stevenson to arrive at the instant invention. Firstly, unlike the presently claimed invention, Stevenson does not disclose a maximum value for the condition  $R_{ch}-R_{cl}$ . Additionally, Stevenson does not disclose or suggest storing of a cold strip, which is cold rolled under usual conditions, at temperatures below room temperature. This is in direct contrast with the instant invention which discloses a method of cold rolling an ageing-sensitive steel strip under normal conditions, followed by storage at temperatures below room temperature.

Furthermore, unlike the instant invention, Stevenson does not disclose or suggest the dependency between the temperature and time of storage and the effect of these two parameters on ageing. In light of these substantial differences, Applicants respectfully submit that Stevenson does not teach substantially the same method as presently claimed and that one of

ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the teachings of Stevenson to arrive at the instantly claimed invention.

Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakaoka (U.S. Patent No. 4,050,959, hereafter "Nakaoka"). The Examiner states that Nakaoka teaches a method for producing a non-ageing steel sheet with high formability at the forming stage, and high hardness at the coat-baking stage. The Examiner asserts that because Nakaoka teaches substantially the same method as instantly claimed, as well as a bake hardenability within the presently claimed range, Nakaoka renders the instant invention obvious.

Applicants respectfully submit that the ordinary artisan would not have been motivated to modify the teachings of Nakaoka to arrive at the instant invention. Claim 3 is directed to a process for the production of a buckling-resistant stove-finished structural component from *ageing-sensitive* steel while preventing ageing of the steel. Nakaoka, on the other hand, teaches production of a non-ageing steel, and not the prevention of ageing of an ageing-sensitive steel.

Additionally, unlike the presently claimed invention, Nakaoka does not disclose or suggest storage and temper rolling of an ageing-sensitive steel. In view of these differences, Applicants respectfully submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been motivated to modify the teachings of Nakaoka to arrive at the instant invention.

Applicants deem the rejection of claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 to be obviated and respectfully request withdrawal thereof.

Applicants hereby respectfully request a two (2) month extension of time for responding to the Office Action. Please deduct any fees resulting from this Amendment from deposit account number 16-2500 of the undersigned.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks it is firmly believed that the subject claims are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,  
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July 16, 2001

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Enclosures: Appendix of Marked Up Version of Amended Claims  
Exhibit A  
Exhibit B

## APPENDIX OF MARKED UP VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

--1. (Twice Amended) A process for the production of a buckling-resistant stove-finished structural component from a cold strip which [consists of] comprises ageing-sensitive steel with a high bake-hardening potential, [more particularly of more than 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>,] characterized in that

- the cold strip is converted by [a dressing] temper rolling to a yield point elongation-free state in which the condition  $R_{ch} - R_{cl} < 2 \text{ N/mm}^2$  is met,
- the cold strip is then stored to storage temperature below room temperature for a storage period whose length is at most equal to the length of the period at whose end the value of critical ageing is reached which results in dependence on the particular storage temperature,
- to storage the cold strip is cold worked to give a structural component, and
- the structural component is [finally] stove-finished.

--3. (Twice Amended) A process for the production of a buckling-resistant stove-finished structural component from a cold strip which [consists of] comprises ageing-sensitive steel with a high bake-hardening potential, [more particularly of more than 70 N/mm<sup>2</sup>,] characterised in that

- the cold strip is stored undressed for a storage period at room temperature,
- following the storage period the cold strip is converted by [dressing] temper rolling to a state in which the condition  $R_{ch} - R_{cl} < 2 \text{ N/mm}^2$  is met, the [dressed] temper rolled cold strip is then cold worked to give a structural component, and
- the structural member is [finally] stove-finished.

# Iron and Steel Dictionary

Deutsch - Englisch  
Englisch - Deutsch  
German - English  
English - German

7. Auflage  
7th edition

Herausgegeben vom / Edited by  
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STAHL  EISEN

EXHIBIT A

## Drehwinkel-Meßumformer

58

Drehwinkel-Meßumformer *m* angle of rotation transducer  
Drehzahl / number of revolutions; speed  
Drehzahlabfall *m* rpm drop; speed drop  
Drehzahlverlauf *m* speed characteristic  
Drehzapfen *m* pivot  
dreieckig three-cornered; triangular  
Dreieckschaltpunkt *m* delta connection  
dreifach threefold  
Drei-Glocken-Gichtverschluß *m* three bell hopper arrangement  
Dreihundert-Grad (300 °C)-Versprödung / irreversible temper brittleness  
Dreikantschraube / triangle head cap screw  
Dreikantstahl *m* triangular section steel  
Dreilagengeblech *n* three-ply plate; triangular section  
Dreilagengestalt *m* three-layer steel; two sided clad steel  
Dreilagengestalt *n* soft center steel sheet  
Dreilochdüse / three-hole nozzle  
Dreiphasen-Sterngegenparallelschaltung / three-phase star inverse parallel connection  
Dreipunktbiegeversuch *m* three-point bending test  
Dreischichtbetrieb *m* three shift operation  
Dreistoffsystem *n* ternary system  
Dreistrangmaschine / three strand machine  
Dreistufenfilter *m* (Spektralanalyse) three-stage transmission filter  
dreistufig three-stage; three-step

dreiteiliger Anfahrkopf *m* three-head dummy bar  
Dreiwälzengerüst *n* three-high rolling stand  
Dreiwelienkompensator *m* concertina-type expansion joint  
Dresslerblumen / pl leathering  
Dressieren dress; level  
Dressieren *n* skin pass rolling; temper (pass) rolling  
Dressiergerüst *n* skin pass rolling mill  
Dressierwalze / roll for skin pass rolling mill; skin pass roll  
Dressierwalzwerk *n* skin pass mill; temper (pass) mill; temper (pass) rolling mill  
DRI *n* direct reduced iron (DRI)  
Drillingsguß *m* triple casting  
Drillknicken *n* torsional buckling  
Drillmoment *n* twisting moment  
Drillwulststahl *m* twisted (reinforcement) bulb steel  
Drop-Weight-Probe / drop-weight trial  
Drossel / (elekt.) choking coil; reactance coil; throttle  
Drosselklappe / butterfly valve; throttle valve  
Drosselleistung / (Lichtbogenofen) supplementary reactor rating  
drosseln choke; throttle  
Drosselspule / (Lichtbogenofen) line reactor (am.); supplementary reactor  
Drosselventil *n* butterfly valve; choke valve; throttle valve  
Druck *m* compression; pressure; thrust  
Druckabfall *m* pressure drop  
Druckausgleichbehälter *m* surge tank

59

## Druckschmierung

Druckbeanspruchung / compression load; compression stress; compressive stress  
Druckbehälter *m* pressure vessel  
Druckbogen *m* sheet (printing)  
Druckbruch *m* compression fracture  
drücken push; spin  
Drücken *n* spinning  
Drücken *n* (Blechumformen) metal spinning  
Drücken *n* von Außenborden spinning of external flanges  
Drücken *n* von Hohlkörpern spinning of hollow items  
Drücken *n* von Innenborden spinning of inside beads  
Drücker *m* pusher  
Druckerausgabe / (EDV) print-out  
Druckerei / printing office  
Druckrolmaschine / printing machine  
Druckerwulchung / (fr. Steine) softening under load (refractory bricks)  
Druckfeder / pressure spring  
Druckfestigkeit / compression strength; compressive strength; crushing strength  
Druckfestigkeit / (Werkzeugstähle) compression strength (tool steels)  
Druckfluerbeständigkeit / retractility under load  
Druckflüssigkeit / hydraulic fluid  
Druckförderer *m* dispenser  
Druckgasentschwebelung / desulphurisation of pressure gas  
Druckgebläse *n* forced draft fan  
Druckgeläufversuch *m* pressure vessel test  
Druckgleitkette / pressure casting mould  
Druckguß *m* compression casting;

die casting; high pressure die casting; pressure pouring  
Druckgußstück *n* pressure die casting  
Druckhöhe / head  
Druckkessel *m* high pressure boiler; high pressure container; high pressure tank  
Druckkraft / (Pressen) compressive force  
Drucklager *n* thrust bearing  
Druckluft / compressed air  
Druckluftanlage / compressed-air system  
Druckluft-Gesenkhammer *m* compressed air drop hammer  
Drucklufthammer *m* compressed air hammer  
Druckluft Härten *n* air blast quenching  
Druckluftheber *m* air lift pump  
Druckluftkessel *m* compressed air container; compressed air tank  
Druckluftleitung / compressed air line  
Druckluftmeßgerät *n* pressure gauge  
Druckluftwerkzeug *n* compressed air tool; pneumatic tool  
Druckmantel *m* pressure shell  
Druckmarkierung / pressure marking  
Druckmeßdose / pressure cell  
Druckmesser *m* manometer; pressure gauge  
Druckminderventil *n* pressure reducing valve  
Druckmutter / screw-down nut  
Druckprobe / tension test  
Druckpumpe / forcing pump  
Druckregler *m* pressure governor  
Druckschmierung / forced lubrication

EXHIBIT A

# **Metals Handbook<sup>®</sup>**

**TENTH EDITION**

## **Volume 1 Properties and Selection: Irons, Steels, and High-Performance Alloys**

Prepared under the direction of the  
ASM INTERNATIONAL Handbook Committee

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EXHIBIT A

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## EXHIBIT A

## Carbon and Low-Alloy Steel Sheet and Strip / 205

Table 6 Tensile requirements for hot-rolled and cold-rolled plain carbon steel sheet and strip

Grade	Yield strength, minimum		Tensile strength, minimum		Elongation in 50 mm (2 in.), minimum, %
	MPa	ksi	MPa	ksi	
General quality hot-rolled sheet and strip in cut lengths or coils (ASTM A 570)(a)					
20S	30		340	49	25.0(b)
230	33		360	52	23.0(b)
250	36		365	53	22.0(b)
275	40		380	55	21.0(b)
310	45		415	60	19.0(b)
345	50		450	65	17.0(b)
380	55		480	70	15.0(b)
General quality cold-rolled sheet in cut lengths or coils (ASTM A 611)(a)					
170	25		290	42	26
205	30		310	45	24
230	33		330	48	22
275	40		360	52	20
550(c)	80(c)		565	82	...
Cold-rolled sheet for pressure vessels (ASTM A 414)					
170(d)	25(d)		310	45	26(e)
205(d)	30(d)		345	50	24(e)
230(d)	33(d)		380	55	22(e)
240(d)	35(d)		415	60	20(e)
260(d)	38(d)		450	65	18(e)
290(d)	42(d)		485	70	16(e)
310(d)	45(d)		515	75	16(e)

(a) For coil products, testing by the producer is limited to the end of the coil. Results of such tests must comply with the specified values. (b) Design considerations must recognize that variation in strength levels may occur throughout the untested portions of the coil. (c) For these levels will not be less than 90% of the minimum values specified. (d) At thickness,  $t$ , of 2.5–3.9 mm (0.097–0.230 in.), for this full-hard product, the yield point approaches the tensile strength and because there is no halt in the gage or drop in the beam, the yield point shall be taken as the stress at 0.5% elongation, under load. (e) Yield strength determined by the 0.2% offset or 0.5% offset under load methods. (f) At thickness,  $t$ , of 3.7–5.9 mm (0.145–0.230 in.). Source: Ref 1

resistant to aging, are preferable to rimmed and capped steels. For ingot cast steels, however, rimmed and capped steels are generally superior in inherent surface quality, are lower in cost, and are preferred over killed steel as long as the occurrence of surface strains is not a problem.

Strain aging is related to the presence of nitrogen in solid solution in the steel and is affected by time and temperature, with longer times and higher temperatures producing greater aging. The strain-aging rate is also dependent on the amount of deformation that has occurred and is increased

when the deformation occurs at higher temperatures or lower strain rates. Another important variable that affects strain aging is the amount of nitrogen in solution. Killed carbon steels have very little susceptibility to strain aging because their nitrogen content is essentially chemically combined with aluminum. Rimmed and capped steels, however, tend to strain age because they contain greater amounts of nitrogen in solid solution (typically 6 to 30 ppm).

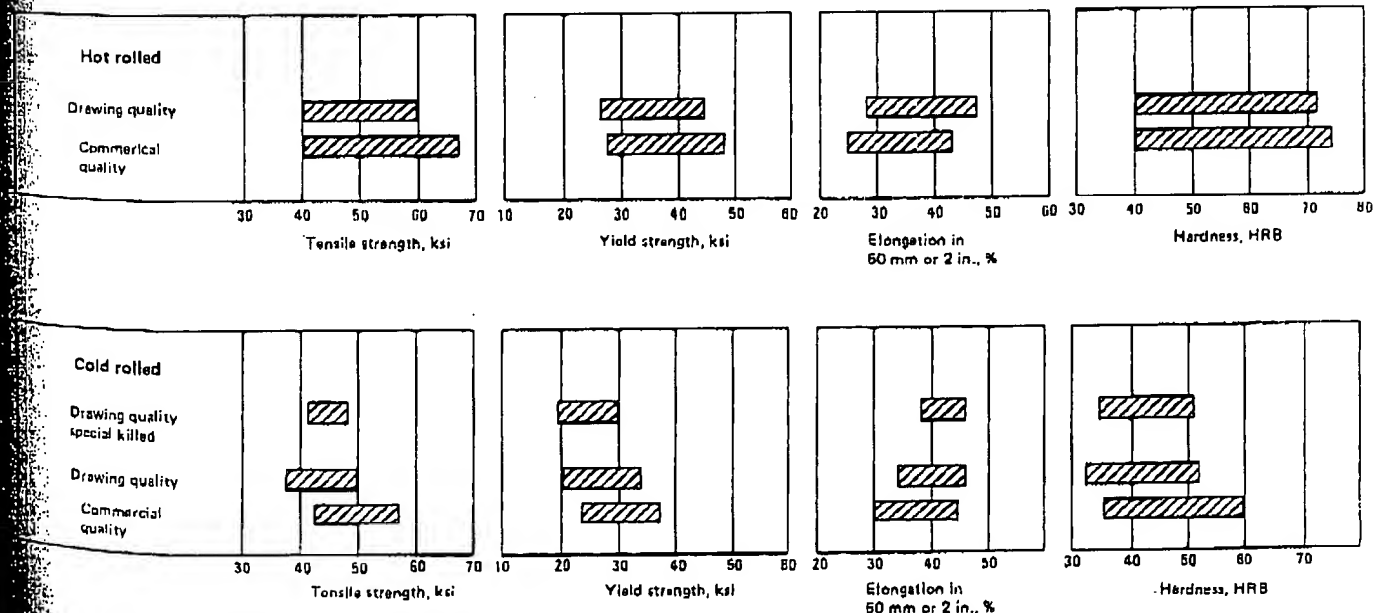
## Control of Flatness

Plain carbon steel sheet is ordinarily sold to two standards of flatness:

- Commercial flatness, which is used where flatness is important but not critical
- The stretcher-level standard of flatness, which is required when little or no forming is to be done and the product is required to be flat and free from waves or oil can, or when flatness is necessary to ensure smooth automatic feeding of forming equipment

The permissible variations for the flatness of hot- and cold-rolled sheet have been established by the Technical Committee of the American Iron and Steel Institute and are given in the AISI Steel Products Manual. Commercial flatness can usually be produced by roller leveling or by temper rolling and roller leveling, but where very flat sheet is required, producers may have to resort to stretcher leveling, tension leveling, or other leveling processes.

In temper rolling, the steel is cold reduced, usually by 1/2 to 2%, which is also



Typical mechanical properties of low-carbon steel sheet shown by the range of properties in steel furnished by three mills. Hot-rolled sheet thickness from 1.519 to 3.416 mm (0.0598 to 0.1345 in., or 16 to 10 gage); cold-rolled sheet thickness from 0.759 to 1.519 mm (0.0299 to 0.0598 in., or 22 to 16 gage). All cold-rolled grades are temper pass. All grades were rolled from rimmed steel except the one labeled special killed. See Table 5 for the mechanical properties of structural (physical) sheet.

EXHIBIT A

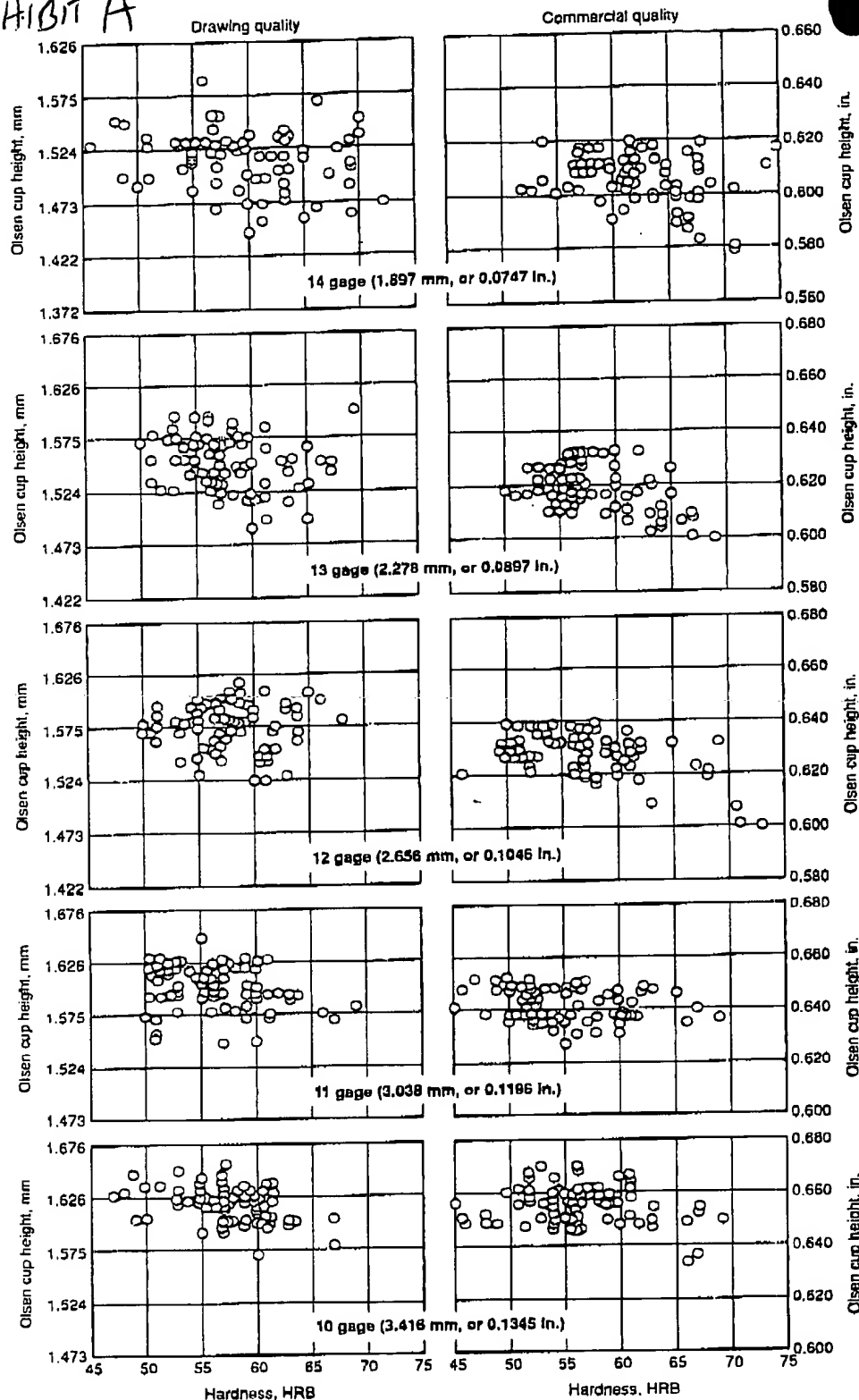


Fig. 2 Scatter in Olsen ductilities of hot-rolled low-carbon steel sheet

effective for removing yield point elongation and preventing stretcher strains.

In roller leveling, a staggered series of small-diameter rolls alternately flexes the

steel back and forth. The rolls are adjusted so that the greatest deformation occurs at the entrance end of the rolls and less flexing occurs at the exit end. Stretcher strains can

also be eliminated by roller leveling, as the deformation is great enough to move yield point elongation. Dead-soft annealed sheet cannot be made suitable for production of expanded parts by roller leveling because the rolls kink the sheet severely, producing leveler breaks. The deformation areas or kinks will not deform further by stretching and will appear as braised after forming.

**Stretcher Leveling.** Leveling by stretcher cut lengths of the temper-rolled lengthwise between jaws (stretcher leveling) is a more positive means of producing flatness. Elongation (stretching) in stretcher leveling may vary from about 3%, which exceeds the elastic limit of steel and therefore results in some permanent elongation. The sheet must be killed or a capped steel having nearly form properties so that it will spring uniformly across its full width and remain flat. It may be necessary to use killed steel having nearly uniform properties so that after stretching, strain markings do not develop.

**Tension Leveling.** Another flattening process that is used for steel sheet is tension leveling, which combines the effects of stretcher and roller leveling. The sheet is pulled to a stress near its yield point while it is simultaneously flexed over small rolls. The combined tension and bending promote yielding at the flex points.

### Modified Low-Carbon Steel Sheet and Strip

In addition to the low-carbon steel sheet and strip products already discussed in this article, there are numerous additional products available that are designed to satisfy specific customer requirements. These products are often made with low-carbon steels having chemical compositions slightly modified from those discussed earlier.

To be considered a plain low-carbon grade, a steel should contain no more than 0.25% C, 1.65% Mn, 0.60% S, and 0.05% Cu, but it may also contain small amounts of other elements, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and boron, that are effective in imparting special characteristics when present singly or in combination. The modified low-carbon steel grades discussed here are designed to provide sheet and strip products having increased strength, formability, and/or corrosion resistance.

**Carbon-Manganese Steels.** Manganese is a solid-solution strengthening element in steel and is also effective in increasing formability. Manganese in amounts ranging from 1.0 to 1.5% is added to low-carbon steel (0.15 to 0.25% C) to provide enhanced strength (yield strength of about 275 MPa or 40 ksi) with good ductility in hot-rolled and cold-rolled sheet and strip. Components fabricated from these higher-manganese steels can be heat treated by quenching

EXHIBIT A

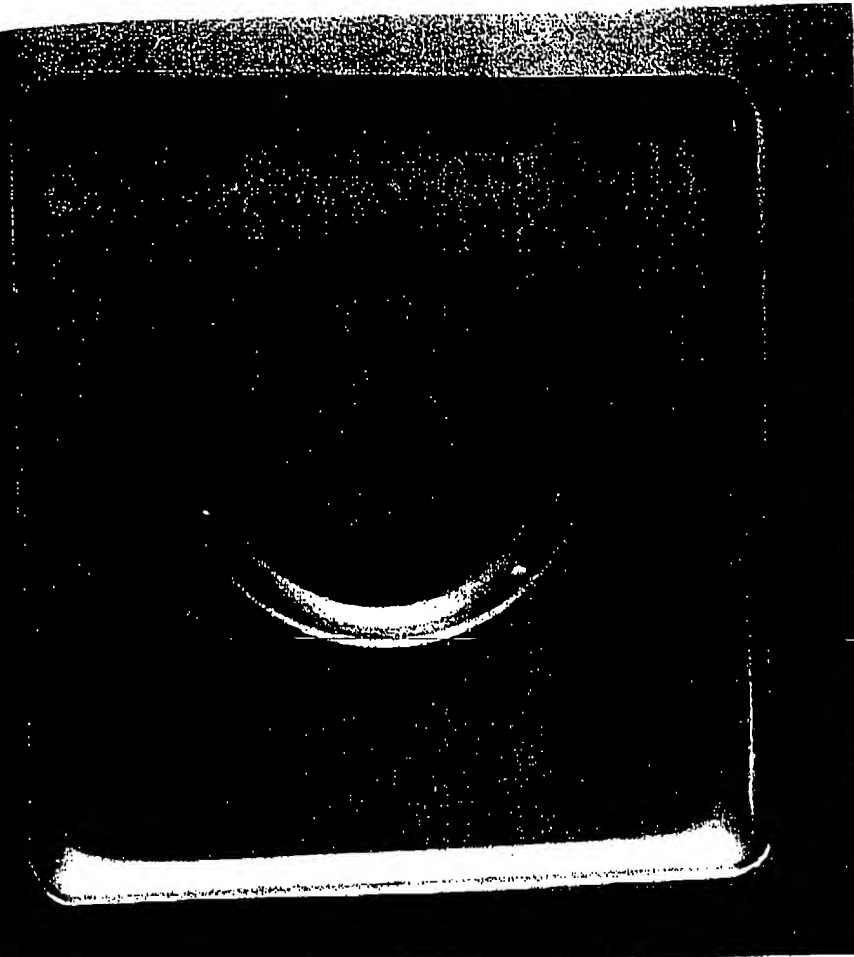
## Embrittlement of Steels / 693

about 4 to 6% reduction. However, if the material is not formed within the safe period, discontinuous yielding will eventually return and impair formability.

Results of the study illustrate the influence of strain aging on mechanical properties (Ref 32). Three steels made by different processes were evaluated: Steel A, silicon and aluminum deoxidized steel; Steel B, capped open hearth steel; and Steel C, capped Bessemer steel. Steel C had the highest nitrogen content. Steels B and C had low aluminum contents, while steel A had sufficient aluminum to tie up the nitrogen. Strips of each were normalized and loaded in tension to a permanent strain of 10%. The strips were held at 25, 230, 480, and 650 °C (75, 450, 900, and 1200 °F) for various lengths of time ( $\leq 25\ 000$  h at 25 and 230 °C, or 75 and 450 °F;  $\leq 10$  h at 480 °C, or 900 °F; and 2 h at 650 °C, or 1200 °F). Hardness, tensile properties, and impact properties (half-width Charpy V-notch specimens) were determined at different aging times.

Figure 10 shows the impact test results for steels A, B, and C strained 10% in tension and aged at room temperature up to 25 000 h. The impact curves are shifted with aging at room temperature for all three steels; steel A exhibits the best aged toughness, and steel C the poorest. Figure 11 shows the increase in hardness for steels A, B, and C aged for times up to 25 000 h at 25 °C (75 °F) and 230 °C (450 °F). Room-temperature aging produced a gradual increase in hardness with time. The maximum hardness was about the same and was reached quickest by steel C and slowest by steel A. The hardness increase with aging at 230 °C (450 °F) was constant for steel A and slowly decreased with aging for steels B and C.

In low-carbon steels, strain aging is caused chiefly by the presence of interstitial solutes (carbon and nitrogen), although hydrogen is known to produce a lesser effect at low temperatures. These interstitial solutes have high diffusion coefficients in iron and high interaction energies with dislocations. The change in mechanical properties of low-carbon rimming steels with different carbon and nitrogen contents that were prestrained 4% and aged various times at 60 °C (140 °F) has been demonstrated (Fig. 12) (Ref 34). This work clearly demonstrates the detrimental influence of higher carbon and nitrogen contents on strain aging. The solubilities of carbon and nitrogen in iron are quite different. Nitrogen solubility is high in the temperature range where rapid precipitation occurs; the solubility of carbon, in equilibrium with cementite, is very low. Therefore, strain aging that is due to carbon at temperatures below 100 °C (210 °F) is insignificant. However, above 100 °C (210 °F),  $\epsilon$  carbide can redissolve and produce substantial strain aging (Ref 35). Strain aging attributable to nitrogen is caused by



Sample of stretcher-strain marks (Lüders bands) on a cold-formed steel part

and may be isomorphous with it can. With aging, the low-temperature will gradually be replaced by  $\text{Fe}_3\text{C}$ . The phase changes during aging of oxygen and iron-carbide quench aged are discussed in the literature (Ref

### Strain Age Embrittlement

Aging occurs in low-carbon steels at certain amounts and then aged, produces an increase in strength and a loss in ductility (Ref 25-27). The degree of deformation, or cold work, is important. Generally, about a 15% reduction in thickness provides the maximum brittleness. The resulting brittleness varies with aging temperature and time. Aging at room temperature is very slow, requiring months to obtain maximum embrittlement. As the aging temperature is increased, the time for maximum embrittlement decreases. Certain coating treatments, such as dip galvanizing, can produce a decrease of embrittlement in areas that have worked the critical amount; this prevents brittle fractures. To prevent this

problem, the part can be annealed before galvanizing. Alternatively, the use of sheet steels containing elements that tie up nitrogen, for example, aluminum, titanium, zirconium, vanadium, or boron, will prevent strain-age embrittlement.

Strain aging may also lead to stretcher-strain marks (Lüders bands) on cold-formed low-carbon sheet steel components. These marks are cosmetic defects, rather than cracks, but their presence on formed parts is unacceptable (Fig. 9). During tensile loading, sheet steel that is susceptible to this defect will exhibit nonuniform yielding followed by uniform elongation. The elongation at maximum load and the total elongation are reduced. decreasing cold formability. In a nonaluminum-killed sheet steel, a small amount of deformation, typically 1% reduction, will suppress the yield point for several months. This process is referred to as roller levelling or temper rolling (Ref 31).

This process is more effective in eliminating the sharp yield point and preventing strain aging than stretching the steel through the Lüders strain, which requires

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EXHIBIT B

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